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(54) An electromagnetic conductivity meter and a conductivity measuring method

Elektromagnetischer Apparat zum Messen der Leitfähigkeit und Verfahren zum Messen der Leitfähigkeit

Appareil électromagnétique pour mesurer la conductivité et méthode de mesure de la conductivité

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- Fukamachi, Mitsuru
Yokohama-shi, Kanagawa-ken (JP)
- Higashi, Satoshi
Ebina-shi, Kanagawa-ken (JP)
- Maruyama, Noboru
Yachiyo-shi, Chiba-ken (JP)

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(73) Proprietors:

- Tosoh Corporation
Shinnanyo-shi, Yamaguchi-ken, 746 (JP)
- NICHIRI MANUFACTURING COMPANY LIMITED
Yachiyo-shi, Chiba-ken (JP)

(72) Inventors:

- Arichika, Kenji
Ebina-shi, Kanagawa-ken (JP)

(74) Representative:

Kearney, Kevin David Nicholas et al
KILBURN & STRODE
30 John Street
London, WC1N 2DD (GB)

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Description

The present invention relates to an electromagnetic conductivity meter and a conductivity measuring method for measuring the conductivity of a liquid by using an electromagnetic induced current.

Measurement of the conductivity of a liquid is often performed in an apparatus for treating a liquid such as liquid chromatograph or desalter. Conventional methods of measuring the liquid conductivity are mainly classified into an electrode method and an electromagnetic induction method.

Figure 2 is a schematic view for explaining the principle of the two-electrode method. In the drawing, an alternating voltage is applied across electrodes 1, 1 from an alternating power source 2. The conductivity is determined in the two-electrode method by outputting via an operational amplifier 3 the amount of a current flowing across the two electrodes 1, 1. A four electrode method is also known for measuring conductivity by determining the voltage fall across two electrodes which are disposed between the electrodes 1 and 1.

Although these two-electrode and four-electrode methods have the advantage that a conductivity ranging from a very low value to a high value (0 to 10,000 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) can be measured, they have the disadvantage that so-called polarization resistance will not become zero because polarization occurs due to a reverse electromotive force caused by an electrolytic product on the surface of an electrode, a concentration gradient or a decrease in electrode reaction speed even if an alternating current is used.

An electromagnetic conductivity meter using an electromagnetic induced current as shown in Figure 3 has been known as another means for measuring liquid conductivity (see JP-A-60-190873).

In Figure 3, a primary coil 6 and a detection coil 7 are wound around first and second excitation rings 4 and 5, respectively. An insulation loop tube 8 passes through the first and second excitation rings 4 and 5 and a liquid to be measured is introduced through the insulation loop tube 8. When an alternating voltage having a given amplitude and a given frequency is applied to the primary coil 6, the liquid in the insulation loop tube 8 serves as a one turn coil so that an electromagnetically induced alternating current will flow through the liquid as represented by a dotted line. This causes an alternating electromotive current to be induced in the detection coil 7. The frequency of the induced alternating electromotive current is the same as the frequency of the voltage applied to the primary coil 6 and its amplitude is proportional to the conductivity of the liquid in the insulation loop tube 8. Therefore, the conductivity of the liquid is determined by measuring the electromotive current induced in the detection coil 7.

Although the electro-magnetic conductivity meter shown in Figure 3 has the advantage that it has excellent corrosion resistance since it will not cause polarization

unlike the above-mentioned electrode method, it has a disadvantage in that it can measure only liquids having a high conductivity. In order to enable one to measure liquids having a low conductivity, it is necessary to increase the capacity of the coils, the input to the primary coil, the amplification of the detection coil output, the power source capacity and the like. Furthermore, the measuring apparatus will not only become complicated and expensive to manufacture, but also it is hard to stably measure conductivities not higher than 5,000 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ since use of the above mentioned measure is limited in view of noise and other disturbance factors. Since it is necessary to form the tube through which an electromagnetically induced alternating current flows, the liquid flowing path will not only become complicated, but also there is still a serious problem that the shunt flow ratio should be maintained constant.

Therefore, the present invention was made to reduce or overcome the disadvantages of the prior art.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an electromagnetic conductivity meter which is simple in structure and is capable of stably measuring the conductivity of liquids having a concentration ranging from low to high and to provide a method of measuring the conductivity of a liquid.

In order to accomplish the above mentioned object, the first aspect of the present invention provides an electromagnetic type conductivity meter comprising: a core; a primary coil wound around the core; an alternating power source for applying an alternating voltage having a given frequency to the primary coil to excite said core; a tube wound around the core in a number of turns, through which a liquid to be measured flows; induction current detecting means disposed at the opposite ends of the tube; and operational means for determining the conductivity of the liquid to be measured from the value of the induction current detected by the induction current detection means.

The second aspect of the present invention provides a method of measuring the conductivity of a liquid comprising the steps of: winding around a core a primary coil; winding a tube through which the liquid to be measured flows, around the core in a number of turns; applying an alternating voltage having a given frequency to the primary coil to excite the core for generating an induction current in the tube; and, determining the conductivity of the liquid to be measured.

The relation between the voltage and the number of turns in an electromagnetic induction circuit such as a transformer is generally represented by a formula (1).

$$V_1/V_2 = k N_1/N_2 \quad (1)$$

The formula (1) is transformed into formula (2).

$$V_2 = k N_2 V_1/N_1 \quad (2)$$

wherein V_1 denotes a voltage across the primary coil 10; V_2 denotes a voltage across the secondary coil; N_1 denotes the number of turns of the primary coil 10; N_2 denotes the number of turns of the secondary coil, and

"k" denotes a constant determined by the shape of the transformer, the sectional area of the coil, the material of the coil, etc.

Since V_1 , V_2 , N_1 , N_2 and k are constant in the present apparatus, if they are represented as "K" and the constant related to the material of the secondary coil is represented as "m", the formula (2) is transformed into formula (3);

$$V_2 = K \cdot m \quad (3)$$

Since $m \propto S$, $V_2 \propto I_2$,

$$I_2 = K_2 \cdot S \quad (4)$$

wherein "S" denotes the conductivity of the liquid in the tube which forms the secondary coil; I_2 denotes the induction current flowing through the secondary coil; and K_2 denotes a constant, that is, it may be appreciated that the conductivity of the liquid in the tube 12 is proportional to the induction current flowing through the secondary coil.

In accordance with the present invention, an alternating voltage having a given frequency is applied to the primary coil wound around a core to excite the core so that an induction current flows through the tube. The conductivity of the liquid to be measured is determined from a measured value of the induction current.

The invention may be put into practice in various ways and one specific embodiment will be described to illustrate the invention, together with two embodiments of the prior art, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a schematic view showing an embodiment of an electromagnetic conductivity meter of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a schematic view for illustrating the principle of a prior art electrode type conductivity meter; Figure 3 is a schematic view illustrating the principle of another prior art electromagnetic conductivity meter;

Figure 4 is an end view of the concrete embodiment of the cell shown in Figure 1;

Figure 5 is a perspective view for illustrating the concrete structure of the electrode; and

Figure 6 is a schematic circuit diagram of the operation circuit for an embodiment of the present invention.

One embodiment of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to Figure 1.

In Figure 1, a primary coil 10 having the number of turns N_1 , is wound around a core 9 and is connected to an alternating power source 11. A tube 12 through which a liquid, the conductivity of which is to be measured, flows is wound around the core 9. The length of the tube 12 wound around the core 9 is proportional to the number of turns of the tube 12. That is, the length of the tube wound around the core 9 increases with increase in the number of turns N_2 of the tube 12 and decreases

with decrease in the number of turns N_2 . An electrode 13 is disposed at each end of the tube 12. Each of the electrodes 13 is connected in series with a circuit group 17 comprising an operational amplifier 14, a range selection circuit 15 which is preset in accordance with the concentration of the liquid to be measured, a high frequency signal waveform processing circuit 16, a zero-balance circuit, a response circuit, and a temperature compensation circuit.

The operation of the electromagnetic conductivity meter of the present invention will now be described.

An alternating voltage having a given frequency is applied to the primary coil 10 from the alternating power source 11.

As a result of this, an electromotive force is generated in the liquid to be measured in the tube 12. This electromotive force generates an induction current in the tube 12, which is then detected by the electrodes 13, 13. The current detected by the electrodes 13 is proportional to the voltage V of the alternating power source 11 applied for exciting the core 9, the number of turns N_1 of the primary coil 10, the length N_2 (the number of turns) of the tube 12 through which the liquid to be measured flows and the conductivity of the liquid to be measured. Since the voltage V of the alternating power source 11, the number of turns N_1 of the primary coil 10 and the length N_2 of the tube 12 (the number of turns) are fixed as constants of the measuring instrument, the conductivity of the liquid to be measured is proportional to the value of the induction current.

It is preferable that N_1 and N_2 be about 100 and 5, respectively. It is also preferable that the frequency and the voltage of the alternating current applied to the primary coil 10 be about 1.5 kHz and 1.5 V, respectively. Since the conductivity changes with the temperature and specifically the change in temperature of 1, it is preferable that a temperature compensated sensor be disposed for reducing the influence of the temperature of the liquid to be measured. In the present embodiment, the temperature sensor is provided on a circuit in the vicinity of the cell, assuming that the temperature of the liquid to be measured is substantially equal to that of the cell. Although the structure of the cell is formed as shown in Figure 1 for simplicity of the description of the invention, the cell may be specifically formed as shown in Figure 4 so that the induction current may be effectively detected. Thus, the number of turns N_1 of primary coil 10 and the number of turns N_2 of the tube 12 are wound around the central core of a ferrite member 20, concentrically.

The electrode may be specifically formed as shown in Figure 5. A connection terminal of the electrode 13 is made of titanium which is bioinert. As shown in Figure 5, the electrode 13 is sandwiched by a pair of electrode installation plates 22, 22 through which the insulation tube 12 which is preferably made of fluoroplastics passes.

These make it possible to stably measure even con-

ductivities no higher than 1,000 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

Therefore, the induction current detected by the electrode 13 is transformed into a voltage, which is amplified by an operational amplifier 14 and is successively passed through a range selection circuit 15 which is capable of selecting a range responsive to the density (conductivity) of the liquid to be measured; a high frequency signal processing circuit 16 which provides an analog signal which is a smoothed high frequency signal; and a circuit group 17 including a balanced circuit 44 which is capable of correcting the output depending upon the amplitude of the background noise, a response circuit 42 for electrically eliminating the noise, and a temperature compensation circuit 40 for automatically correcting the value of the conductivity depending upon change in temperature of the cell. A signal is outputted from the circuit. The conductivity of the liquid to be measured is determined based on the outputted signal. Since the influence of temperature cannot be neglected in order to measure conductivity at high sensitivity, it is preferable to dispose a temperature compensation sensor (not shown) at the induction current detecting portion to reduce the influence of the temperature of the liquid to be measured. This enables the system to stably measure even conductivities not in excess of 1,000 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

The present invention may be used for monitoring of the gradient of ion exchange, hydrophobic, affinity chromatography in a gradient effluent process of a liquid chromatography. For example, at what salt density a target protein is melted (eluted) out may be directly and simply monitored.

Typical elution liquids include phosphate buffer containing ammonium sulphate and acetate buffer containing sodium sulphate.

As mentioned above, in accordance with the present invention, an electromotive force induced in the tube can be detected as a signal of a high induction current by winding the tube through which flows the liquid, whose conductivity is to be measured, around the core per se which is excited by the alternating voltage having a given frequency. This makes it possible to measure the conductivity of the liquid ranging from a low to high concentration. Since the tube is only wound around the core, the tube is simple so that a shunt effect can be eliminated.

Claims

1. An electromagnetic conductivity meter having a core (9); a primary coil (10) wound around the core; an alternating power source for applying an alternating voltage having a given frequency to the primary coil to excite the said core; characterised in that a tube (12) is wound around the core in a number of turns through which tube a liquid whose conductivity is to be measured can be passed;

5 induction current detecting means is disposed at each end of the tube; and operational means is provided determining the conductivity of the liquid passing through the said tube from the value of the induction current detected by the induction current detection means.

2. An electromagnetic conductivity meter as claimed in Claim 1 characterized in that a temperature compensation thermistor is provided for compensating for changes in conductivity of the liquid passing through the said tube due to changes in the temperature thereof.
- 10 3. An electromagnetic conductivity meter as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2 characterized in that a range selection circuit is provided for adjusting the output of the meter in accordance with the concentration of the liquid to be measured.
- 15 4. A method of measuring the conductivity of a liquid comprising the steps of providing a core around which is wound a primary coil and a tube through which the liquid, whose conductivity is to be measured, can be passed; passing the said liquid through the tube, applying an alternating voltage having a given frequency to the primary coil to excite the core and thereby generate an induction current in the tube, detecting and measuring the said induced current and determining the conductivity of the liquid from the said induced current, characterised in that the tube is wound in a number of turns around the core.
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Patentansprüche

1. Ein elektromagnetischer Apparat zum Messen der Leitfähigkeit, der einen Kern (9); eine Primärspule (10), die um den Kern gewickelt ist; eine Wechselstrom-leistungsquelle zur Anwendung einer Wechselspannung, die eine gegebene Frequenz zu der Primärspule hat, um den Kern anzuregen, hat; gekennzeichnet dadurch, daß ein Rohr (12) um den Kern mit einer Anzahl an Windungen umwickelt ist, wobei durch dieses Rohr eine Flüssigkeit, deren Leitfähigkeit es zu messen gilt, hindurchgeleitet werden kann; eine Induktionsstrom-detektionseinrichtung, die an jedem Ende des Rohres angeordnet ist; und eine Funktionseinrichtung ist vorgesehen, die die Leitfähigkeit der Flüssigkeit, die durch das Rohr hindurchtritt, durch den Wert des Induktionsstromes, der durch die Induktionsstromdetektionseinrichtung detektiert wird, bestimmt.
2. Ein elektromagnetischer Apparat zum Messen der Leitfähigkeit nach Anspruch 1, gekennzeichnet dadurch, daß ein Wärmeausgleichsthermistor vor-

gesehen ist, um Leitfähigkeitsveränderungen der Flüssigkeit, die durch das Rohr hindurchtritt, aufgrund von Veränderungen der Temperatur derselben zu kompensieren.

3. Ein elektromagnetischer Apparat zum Messen der Leitfähigkeit nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, gekennzeichnet dadurch, daß eine Bereichsauswahlabschaltung vorgesehen ist, um den Ausganges des Apparates entsprechend der Flüssigkeitskonzentration, die zu messen ist, einzustellen. 10
4. Ein Verfahren zum Messen der Leitfähigkeit einer Flüssigkeit, das die Schritte des Anordnens eines Kernes, um welchen eine Primärspule und ein Rohr, durch welches die Flüssigkeit, deren Leitfähigkeit gemessen werden soll, hindurchtreten kann, gewunden ist; des Hindurchtretenlassens der Flüssigkeit durch das Rohr; des Anwendens einer Wechselspannung, die eine gegebene Frequenz hat, auf die Primärspule, um den Kern anzuregen und dadurch einen Induktionsstrom in dem Rohr erzeugt; des Detektierens und Messens des induzierten Stromes und des Bestimmens der Leitfähigkeit der Flüssigkeit aus dem induzierten Strom umfaßt, gekennzeichnet dadurch, daß das Rohr mit einer Anzahl an Windungen um den Kern gewunden ist. 15 20 25

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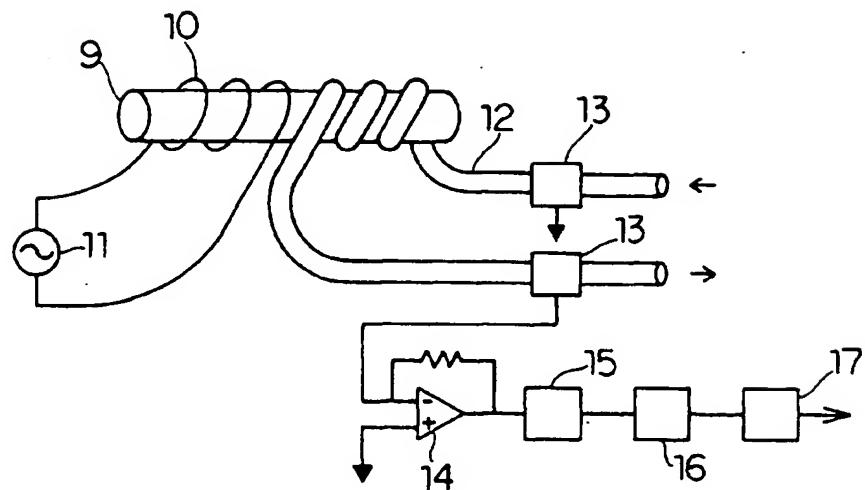
Revendications

1. Appareil électromagnétique pour mesurer la conductivité ayant un noyau (9), une bobine primaire (10) enroulée autour du noyau, une source de courant alternatif pour appliquer une tension alternative ayant une fréquence donnée à la bobine primaire pour exciter ledit noyau, caractérisé en ce qu'un tube (12) est enroulé autour du noyau en formant un certain nombre de spires, tube à travers lequel peut passer un liquide dont la conductivité doit être mesurée, des moyens de détection de courant d'induction étant disposés au niveau de chaque extrémité du tube, et des moyens opérationnels étant agencés pour déterminer la conductivité du liquide passant à travers ledit tube à partir de la valeur du courant d'induction détecté par les moyens de détection de courant d'induction. 35 40 45
2. Appareil électromagnétique pour mesurer la conductivité selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce qu'une thermistance de compensation de température est agencée pour compenser les variations de la conductivité du liquide passant à travers ledit tube dues à des variations de sa température. 50 55
3. Appareil électromagnétique pour mesurer la conductivité selon la revendication 1 ou 2, caractérisé

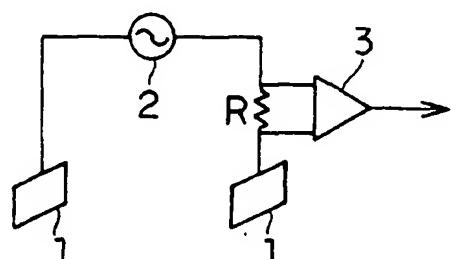
en ce qu'un circuit de sélection de plage est agencé pour ajuster la sortie de l'appareil de mesure en fonction de la concentration du liquide à mesurer.

- 5 4. Procédé pour mesurer la conductivité d'un liquide, comportant les étapes consistant à fournir un noyau autour duquel est enroulée une bobine primaire et un tube à travers lequel peut passer le liquide dont la conductivité est à mesurer, faire passer ledit liquide à travers le tube, appliquer une tension alternative ayant une fréquence donnée à la bobine primaire pour exciter le noyau et, par conséquent engendrer un courant d'induction dans le tube, détecter et mesurer ledit courant induit et déterminer la conductivité du liquide à partir dudit courant induit, caractérisé en ce que le tube est enroulé en formant un certain nombre de spires autour du noyau.

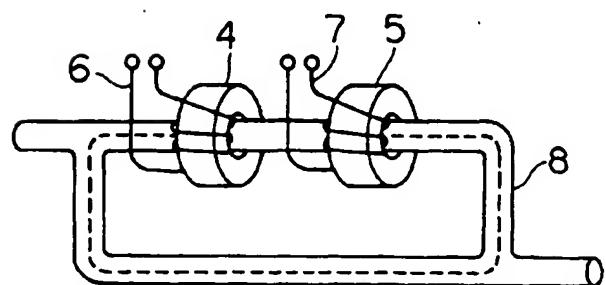
F I G. 1



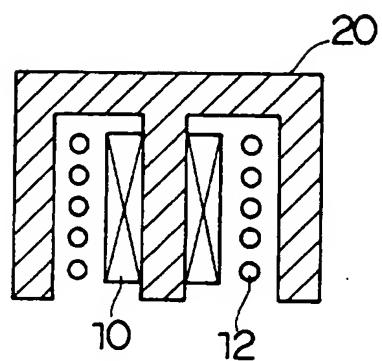
F I G. 2



F I G. 3



F I G. 4



F I G. 5

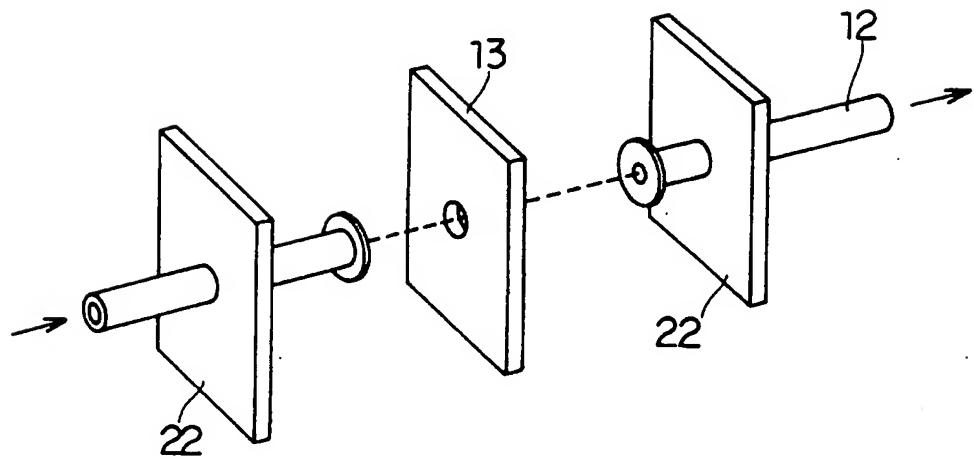


FIG. 6

